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A SERMON

PREACHED AFTER THE ORDINATION

HELD BY

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD, AT CUDDESDON,

On Trinity Sunday, 1856.

BY THE

REV. H. J. PYE, M. A.,

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## A S E R M O N.

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S. MARK III. 23.

“HOW CAN SATAN CAST OUT SATAN?”

WHAT argument could be more unanswerable than that which our LORD opposed to the Jews? He makes them witnesses for Him in spite of themselves; they had been compelled to admit the fact that He did really cast out devils, and He shows them that from this admission followed the truth, they sought to deny, that the kingdom of GOD was come unto them, (S. Matt. xii. 28.) For the fact of the miracle (which they admitted) proved that our LORD had more power than man, and the nature of the miracle showed that their way of accounting for it was manifestly wrong, and that it could not be from Satan that such power was derived.

And, my brethren, such is the argument that we shall be able to use to the world, unless our ministry be useless and in vain. The world must be led to acknowledge the fact of our spiritual miracles, and to see at the same time that the effect of them is to weaken Satan's power, till they are obliged to say of

us, as Nicodemus said to Him who sends us, "We know that Thou art a Teacher sent from God, for no man can do the miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him." But before the world can realize this truth with regard to the priests of God's Church, we must realize it ourselves; the priest who will stand firm in evil report and good report, requires an assurance in his own mind that he is doing the work of God; and in satisfying himself on this matter he must consider his position with respect to the Church universal. He must also have weighed well the ground of his teaching in connection with the particular part of the Church to which he belongs, and he must feel within himself that his object is to promote the glory of God, and that the Spirit of Holiness is working in his own soul.

Our assurances then that we are teachers sent from God will be the subject of this sermon; in which we shall consider the priest's character, as it is catholic, national, and individual. May God give us His blessing, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. Amen.

I. "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you," was the commission of our Blessed LORD to the eleven Apostles. He "whom the FATHER had sanctified and sent into the world" gave them a work to do for Him and with Him in the world; and thus in the fullest sense the Apostles became teachers sent from God: for it was not only that they were sent by CHRIST, who Himself was God, but they were associated with Him in the work of winning souls from the power of Satan. He joins them with Himself in that commission which as Man He had received from the FATHER. "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you."

But this work which the Head of the Church called the Apostles to do with Him was to last, as He Himself declared, “even unto the end of the world;” and therefore the commission and authority which He gave them must also last in the Church even when they were dead. It follows, therefore, that there must be a means of continuing that commission in the Church, and accordingly we find that the Apostles (believing they were authorised so to do) proceeded, after our LORD’S Ascension, to increase their number by the ordination of Saint Matthias, and referring to the charge of S. Paul to Timothy we find proof that such extension of the Apostolic commission to others was in accordance with the will of GOD; for in this case we see that with the commission the grace to execute it was also conveyed by the laying on of hands by S. Paul and the Presbytery. Now I am not concerned here to enter into the difference of orders, or to show in what way the Bishops who succeeded the Apostles might be inferior, and in what way they were equal to them. It is enough to remark that from this it is evident that in some degree the *Presbytery* are united in the Apostolic commission which our LORD gave to the Eleven.

But we must also consider that the Apostles were sent to act for CHRIST in His Church *collectively*. Their spiritual powers and authority were not given to them as separate individuals, that they might act independently of one another, but rather as a trust reposed in their united body, so that they were all equally responsible for the welfare of the Catholic Church. So does S. Cyprian teach us, in that well-known passage, where he speaks of the apparent priority which the SAVIOUR gave to S. Peter.

“Certainly,” he says, “the other Apostles were what Peter was, endued with an *equal fellowship of honour and power.*” *Pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis.*

Then as this undivided commission which God gave them was extended to others, it follows that every one receiving it through the appointed medium in the Church, becomes a sharer of that grace and authority which was given to the Apostles, not as a separate teacher, but, as one who in common with others is sent forth for the whole Catholic Church. The Church, (as we shall have occasion to consider presently,) may limit us in the actual exercise of our commission to particular localities, but looking at ordination in its essence, we see that it gives us each a work to do, and so far makes us each responsible for the welfare of the whole body, of which CHRIST is the Head. We have been received into that fellowship of honour and power in which the Eleven were united to their LORD; and thus it is that we venture to realise to ourselves the truth of those awful words spoken to us at our ordination, “Whose sins ye forgive they are forgiven: whose sins ye retain they are retained.” They are the LORD’S words to the Apostolic body, to which we, through the appointed medium of the Church, have been made to belong.—Truly our position with respect to the Catholic Church is very awful; for our responsibility is very great!

We have incurred the responsibility of the whole Apostolic company, for we have been united with them in that undivided commission which the Eleven received. Surely such a thought must make us feel more anxious for the welfare of the whole Church, and more earnest in our prayers on her behalf; but



at the same time it will not make us afraid, for while we feel the responsibility which we incur, by being thus joined in fellowship with the Apostles, we find in this fact the very assurance we most require, for we see that the undivided commission which the Apostles received, is the commission of the Man CHRIST JESUS, "As My FATHER hath sent Me even so send I you;" and thus through CHRIST in His Human nature, as Head of this holy brotherhood, "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," the "Bishop of souls," we have this assurance to our comfort, as priests of the Catholic Church, that we are teachers sent from GOD. But in considering the priest as a teacher sent from GOD we must also notice his special connection with that part of the Church in which he is called to minister: for though his orders received from God, through the appointed medium in the Church, enable him to act in common with his brethren in the ministry for the whole Catholic Church throughout the world, so that his ministrations where-soever performed are valid, yet in order to prevent confusion in the body, the Church has from the very first appointed different men to different spheres of action, and therefore the priest also requires to be assured that he has *mission* in the Church, else the very exercise of his Apostolic functions may be the means of rending the body of CHRIST; and while he ministers the gift entrusted to him in his orders, to the saving of individual souls, he may be helping on the mischief which Satan had planned against the Catholic Church as a whole, for whose welfare (as I have endeavoured to show) we are each responsible. For instance, a schismatical priest might go and minister in parts of CHRIST's fold where the Church had not given

him mission, and if he were to proceed to absolve penitent sinners, undoubtedly his act would be valid, and those who were truly penitent, and were not conscious of sin in making use of his ministry would be really absolved: but though his act would be valid it would be irregular, and as tending to create schism, it would be to the injury of the Catholic Church, and therefore the priest himself would grievously sin.

We proceed, then, to look for a further assurance, with respect to our mission, and to consider the priest's character as it is national, which is our second part.

II. In the consideration of our mission as priests of the Church of England, many apparent difficulties present themselves in consequence of the schism which at present unhappily divides the Catholic Church; for when we claim to have mission here as teachers sent from God, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we are liable to be asked, on what ground we teach the doctrines of the Church of England?—whether it is because we judge them to be true, or because we receive them on Church authority? And if we say, on the one hand, because we judge them to be true from our own personal inquiry, then we are told that we must give up all authoritative teaching, for our thinking these doctrines true will bind no one else to receive them who may happen to come to a different conclusion: if on the other hand we say we teach them on the authority of the Church, then we are brought at once to the question, how can the Church teach differently in different lands?

Now in order to show the consistency of our position as teachers sent from God having mission through

the Church of England, I must first ask you to consider the position of a priest in any National Church when the whole was in a healthy state, and we shall then proceed to inquire how far that position is affected by the schism which at present prevails.

First then, the position of every National Church is twofold, *relative* as regards the rest of the Catholic Church, and *abstract* as being *the* Church in that land : in its relative character the Church in any land promulgates *absolutely* the doctrines of the Catholic Church for the whole body : in its abstract character it decides all matters arising within itself *conditionally*, i.e., so far as they are undecided by the Church at large. Now it is evident, that acting in her former character, every National Church has a claim upon the *faith* of her members, and can call them to ground their belief upon her teaching ; for then she utters the voice of the undivided body, to whom it was promised that the HOLY GHOST should guide it into all truth ; so far therefore, as the Priest teaches for the National Church what has been decided by the *whole* Church, as a teacher sent from GOD he teaches the same in all lands, and speaks infallible truth. But when a National Church speaks in her abstract character, she has only a claim upon the *respect*, and not on the faith of her members, for it is the act of a sect to take the promise as applying only to itself which was made to the Church as a whole ; a part of the Church however large, in its abstract character, can only decide matters *conditionally*, and therefore can only have a claim on the respect of those to whom it delivers its teaching, on points which the whole Church has not decided.

Thus, to take an instance, in the case of the Synods

held at Alexandria to consider the doctrine of Arius, the Alexandrian Church could only decide the matter *conditionally*. No doubt its decision would have great weight with the Christians of that province; but (humanly speaking) it was possible for the Catholic Church to have reversed the decision, and the counter Synod held at that time in Bithynia, is exactly a case in point; therefore, at that stage of the controversy, no National Church could claim of its members that they should ground their faith upon its decision; but when it had become clear, after the Council of Nice, that the Catholic Church had decided the matter, then the position of the Church of Alexandria was altered with respect to the doctrines of Arius, and speaking in its relative character with the voice of the undivided Church, it could call upon its members, for conscience' sake, to accept its teaching.

We see then, that teachers sent from God, might teach differently in different places, even when there was no schism in the body, for they could only deliver as coming from God what the whole Church had decided; and when they spoke on controverted points, they could only on behalf of the Church which gave them mission, lay claim to the respect of their hearers: their position was surely a consistent one, for while the controversy was pending, how could they teach infallible truth? Their Apostolic commission did not authorize them to teach a doctrine absolutely, till the Catholic Church was agreed; what was decided they spoke as teachers sent from God in virtue of their orders; what was not decided, they could only deliver as the opinion in that part of the Church through which they received their mission.

Such was the position of a Priest in any National

Church when the Catholic Church was undivided. Let us now go on to inquire what effect the schism which now prevails has had in altering it. We see at once that the schism has had the effect of destroying the relative character of different parts of the Church, and from this there result two serious evils,—1st, that the mission received in one part of the Church is neither claimed nor acknowledged in another, even though the orders may be undeniable, so that a necessity is involved of having Priests acting in one country who hold their mission from the Church in another. Such is one unavoidable irregularity arising from the schism in the Catholic Church ; but 2ndly, these Priests who act in the same place as teachers sent from God, and yet hold their mission through different parts of the Church, are liable to be continually teaching differently on undecided doctrines, for the relative character of the different parts of the Church being destroyed, there necessarily followed a stagnation in the action of the Church as a whole, so that all controversies, at that time undecided, remain as they were, and as different Councils and Synods in different parts of the Church acting in their abstract character, came to different decisions, the teaching of the Priest must vary systematically on such points, according as he receives his mission through one part of the Church or another. But though this creates a confusion, it does not alter the position of the Priest from what it was under similar circumstances in primitive times before the Church was divided, for as we have seen these different parts of the Church acting in their abstract character could only decide doctrines conditionally, and therefore according to the doctrines of the Church, through which they received their mis-

sion, the Priests in one land may teach differently from the Priests in another on such matters, and yet all be teachers sent from God ; for in those things which God has revealed through His Church they all agree, and in the controversies which God has not led His Church to decide, no wonder they disagree.

In applying this to ourselves as Priests of the Catholic Church having mission through the Church of England, we look upon the Church of England in the first place as having a relative position with respect to the rest of the Church up to a certain period, and accordingly we see that our mission authorizes us to deliver, as teachers sent from God, the doctrines which at that period the Church was teaching throughout the world. The doctrines of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, are declared as absolute truths by the Church of England, as well as by the Church in other lands ; but with regard to the controversies which have arisen in later times, and on which the Universal Church has been able to come to no decision, in consequence of the schism which divided her, we find the Church of England warning us not to teach absolutely, and telling us that it is possible even for general Councils to err ; and we see in her Articles of religion that her object is rather to guard us against innovation and error, than to pronounce dogmatical decisions. This is sometimes made her reproach, that her teaching is on many points so indefinite ; but those who make this complaint seem most strangely to overlook the fact that, if she had decided absolutely on such matters, apart from the rest of the Church, she would have been doing what every sect, that ever troubled the Church, has done, putting herself in the place of the Church Universal.

Then, brethren, there is nothing to destroy the second assurance, that we have through the Church of England, that mission which is needful to make our ministrations regular, in the fact that this part of the Church teaches differently to other parts on some points, for this only proves to us that God has not yet been pleased to reveal these things, and what He has not revealed we cannot teach, as teachers sent from God. We may grieve over the confusion which the schism has caused in the Church, and wish that we had more definite teaching, but it is one of the difficulties we cannot avoid, go where we will. No part of the Church, however large, can give us authority to teach absolutely what God has not led the whole Church to decide ; all that it concerns us to ascertain in order to have the assurance we require, is whether the Church of England holds a true position as the Catholic Church in this land ; and having satisfied ourselves from the historical evidence on this matter, we rest assured that we receive a true mission at her hands, and we take the conditional decisions of her Synods on undecided points of doctrine, as the nearest approach to Catholic teaching which we can have.

We have thus considered our assurance that we are acting according to the Will of God, as teachers sent from Him both as regards the Catholic Church, and also as regards the Church of this land.

But though we find in these considerations sufficient assurance to satisfy those to whom we are sent, yet in order to make us happy in the discharge of our ministry, we require a further assurance with respect to our own souls ; it is an awful warning to every Priest that one of the Apostles proved a traitor. We may receive

the gifts which S. Paul speaks of, to the saving of others, and yet be lost ourselves. We may cast out Satan by virtue of an office, and yet hear it said to us as individuals, "I never knew you." We may preach to others, and yet be cast away. We turn then to consider the assurance which the Priest requires in his individual character : which is our third part.

III. The Priest is not only sent to act in common with others for the whole Catholic Church, but we have also seen that he holds a mission to act specially for a particular part of the Church, and if we descend one step further, we see that he is not only sent to act in common with others for the National Church to which he specially belongs, but that in most cases he receives a particular charge in the National Church to minister personally for certain individual souls. Now it is when we thus consider him in the more immediate exercise of his ministry, that we see the necessity of holiness in himself, in order to give him the full assurance he requires ; for when he comes to deal with individuals, it is not the diligent exercise of his functions, or the soundness of his teaching which will suffice in all cases to save the souls of those committed to his charge ; for though the unworthiness of the ministers hinders not the effect of the Sacraments : and therefore the due performance of his various duties externally, may be enough for some, yet there will always be others among his flock who require his example and his experience. He is sent as the guide of those who are benighted in the wilderness, to lead them onward to where the Jordan may be crossed with safety ; and therefore before he can feel happy in his ministry, he must assure himself that his own lamp is still lighted, and that he knows something of the



way. We must be able to feel that we are setting an example to those whom we teach ; otherwise (however true) our teaching will come powerless from our lips. We must have a consciousness that we are going forward, before we can really venture heartily to arouse the careless ones who would pitch their tent in the desert, or turn back to Egypt in their hearts ; for if we know in ourselves that we are really as careless, as worldly, as self-indulgent, as they are, we shall feel that we are giving them an excuse for not listening to us : that we are casting a stumbling-block in their way.

And not only our example, but our experience is also required ; and we must satisfy ourselves that we have some knowledge of spiritual things ; for how shall we, with any feeling but that of the hypocrite, venture in secret to speak to others of the particulars of a converted life, while we are conscious that we know nothing of them really ourselves ? How shall we direct them in the attaining such a grace, or the conquering such a temptation, if we have never struggled against temptation or grown in grace ourselves ? It is not enough that we should know by books the rules of holiness, so as to be able to try experiments on those who seek counsel of us. We must be able to tell them of remedies which we have found efficacious in our own souls. It is not enough that we are able to advise them to use some plan recommended by the Saints of old ; but we must be able to sympathise with them in their difficulty, or their temptation, and to answer their question, “ How do *you* act in such a case ? ”

Such, brethren, are the assurances we require as teachers sent from God, to cast out Satan, and to

weaken his power in the world, in the nation, and in the hearts of those committed to our special care. And if these assurances be not realised in our own souls, our ministry will commence in fearfulness, and end in our own dreadful ruin. We have only to look forward for a moment to the actual exercise of our Apostolic functions, and we see how it must be so. Thou goest forth to thy work joined in commission with thy LORD, and there are many such as came to Him when on earth, ready to meet thee on thy way. See this sinner grieving over the past, and trembling at the thoughts of the future ; and lo ! *thou* hast a balm to soothe his unquiet spirit ; the LORD hath sent *thee* to this miserable creature to say, “Be of good cheer.” See this wretched one, “who long hath tossed on his thorny bed of pain :” this paralytic who hath no one to help him, while others are cured ; this blind man like Bartimæus, whom the multitude will not care for ; and *thou* art sent to give them a comfort that health and strength cannot inspire, and which pain and sickness cannot destroy ; yea, look again and see this one so sore distressed : this widow, like the widow of Nain : these sisters like Martha and Mary : and then think *thou* art joined in commission with the conqueror of death : *thou* art sent to stop the mourners, and cheer them on their way. Or once more, behold these careless men of the world, who, like Herod and Pilate, hate and are reconciled, regardless of the SAVIOUR’S sorrows : these fallen ones held in bondage by their passions and their lusts : ready to meet thee with the cry of the Demoniac of Gadara, “let us alone ; what have we to do with Thee ?” or, these “fools who make a mock at sin,” “who corrupt other and speak of wicked blasphemy :” and then consider that the LORD

hath sent *thee* armed with the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God ;” the sword which hath been put into thy hands this day, that thou mightest go for Him to face the enmity of the world, and tell them the truth, they will not stop to hear ; that thou mightest cut asunder the bonds with which Satan’s captives are bound, and let them go free ; that thou mightest turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the LORD. “Per te quasi per aquæductum verbum suum emittet, gratias suas et merita distribuit.”

Brethren, when we look at the work we are going forth to do, we indeed require the assurances that we are endued with power from on high, and that we have a true mission to use that power here. And being satisfied on these points, we have need of that further assurance, that we are striving to be personally holy : lest it should come to pass, that our worldliness or indolence, or sin, should cause us to forget the gift that is in us, to neglect our mission, and to leave God’s work undone ; for what if in the Judgment day there should be one whose contrition ended in the despair of Judas, instead of the penitence of Peter : because through *our* carelessness or want of faith he did not find the relief that his burdened soul was sighing for ; what, if there should be any who turned aside to curse God and die, because in their pain or their sorrow they could not find the comfort that *we* were entrusted to convey to them ? What, if some impenitent sinner should be able to plead against us at the last, that we sought not the lost sheep when he might have been found ?

Brethren, I can only leave you to apply such a thought for yourselves, remembering that the text

must be our unanswerable argument that we were teachers sent from God ; or otherwise it will be the proof that notwithstanding His gifts for others, we have sold ourselves to His enemy, by accounting for the fact, why Satan remained where *we* were sent to cast him out.

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